



(S) [REDACTED] Language DISL, Speaks on 'Tips for New Analysts' as Part of the Year of Languages

FROM: SIGINT Communications  
Unknown  
Run Date: 03/07/2005

---

*Now is the best time to be a language analyst at NSA (U)*

---

(U//FOUO) [REDACTED] a Language DISL\* assigned to the International Security Issues Product Line (S2C), spoke at NSAW on " *Language Analysis through a Wide-Angled Lens: Tips for New Analysts* " as part of the celebration of 2005 as the Year of Languages. [REDACTED] a 38-year veteran of NSA, began her career as a high school work-study student. During high school, she attended Vietnamese language classes on the weekends and in summer. After graduating, she was hired on as a full-time language analyst. Since that time, she has learned a number of new languages and has been able to use her skills in several overseas positions.

(U) [REDACTED] began her talk by stressing that, "It's all about them [the customer]. It isn't about us." To answer the customer's needs, [REDACTED] emphasized four questions that language analysts should try to answer:

- What really happened?
- What was the mindset of the target?
- What are the implications of the event on the current situation (tactical view)?
- What is the impact of the event on the future (strategic view)?

(U//FOUO) By no means does [REDACTED] imply that answering these questions is easy. The SIGINT that we deal with is often incomplete and vague, but our goal should be to try to give our customers as much information and analysis about the SIGINT event as possible. The role of the language analyst is crucial in this process: language analysts must have a deep knowledge of the language as well as solid analytical skills.

(U//FOUO) [REDACTED] suggested **three methods** that language analysts can use to improve their language and critical thinking skills. First, a language analyst must **question himself/herself constantly**. We all have our own set of values and ideas based on our culture and environment, but we need to recognize that our targets may have a completely different world view. We need to be careful that our own set of values does not interfere with objective analysis of our targets.

(U//FOUO) Secondly, we need to **take advantage of the huge cadre of experts** both at NSA and elsewhere. Listen to what other people are saying about your target, whether at the CIA or in the press and in academia. The more knowledge you have, the better able you will be to understand and exploit your target.

(U//FOUO) The last tool is to **travel to the area of interest** via a PCS\*, TDY\*, or in a language immersion course. [REDACTED] emphasizes that the deep cultural knowledge and language skills that can be obtained as the result of foreign travel will dramatically change the way you think, and the way you approach your career. Now is the best time to take advantage of in-country language immersion training, as the commitment from managers to support language training is strong, and there is money to back up that commitment.

(U) [REDACTED] finished by stressing that this is, without a doubt, the best time to be a language analyst at NSA. She advised taking advantage of all the opportunities that are open for language analysts, not just for our own careers, but for the millions of Americans who are relying on us to do the best job possible.

---

\*(U) Notes:

DISL = Defense Intelligence Senior Level

PCS = Permanent Change of Station  
TDY = Tour of Duty

**“(U//FOUO) SIDtoday articles may not be republished or reposted outside NSANet without the consent of S0121 ([DLsid.comms](#)).”**

---

DYNAMIC PAGE – HIGHEST POSSIBLE CLASSIFICATION IS  
TOP SECRET // SI // TK // REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR NZL  
DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108